

HOUSE RESOLUTION 122

By Brown

A RESOLUTION to commend the program participants involved in the 104th General Assembly's salute to Black History Month.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those estimable individuals who, through their extraordinary efforts and vision, have distinguished themselves as leaders in recognizing and promoting the significance of Black History in Tennessee politics; and

WHEREAS, in February 2005, at the request of Representative Tommie Brown, fourteen illustrious gentlemen coordinated and graciously portrayed and represented the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 14 intrepid African American men who, during the Reconstruction years following the Civil War, valiantly took their places in the Tennessee General Assembly, the first of their race to hold those elected offices; and

WHEREAS, we especially want to thank Fisk University students Mr. Eric Jenkins, Mr. Omar Lewis, Mr. Kyle D. Parks, and Mr. Dante Pope; Legislative Interns Mr. Oliver Clark, Mr. James Guster and Mr. Josh Morgan; lobbyists Dr. Albert G. Berry of Berry Consulting Group, Mr. Spruell Driver of Miller and Martin PLLC, Mr. Theodore G. Morrison, Jr. of R.E.J. and Associates, and Mr. A. J. Starling, Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council; Mr. Melvin Alexander, Tennessee Department of Revenue; and Mr. Terry Barksdale; and

WHEREAS, these estimable gentlemen graciously portrayed the following valiant African American legislators who, during the tumultuous years following the Civil War, braved hostility and threats to serve their State as law makers:

Sampson W. Keeble, Republican of Davidson County, 38<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

John W. Boyd, Republican of Tipton County, 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> General Assemblies

Thomas Frank Cassels, Republican of Shelby County, 42<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly

Isham F. Norris, Republican of Shelby County, 42<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly

Thomas A. Sykes, Republican of Davidson County, 42<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly

Samuel A McElwee, Republican of Haywood County, 43<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

Leonard Howard, political affiliation unknown, of Shelby County, 43<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

David Foote Rivers, Republican of Fayette County, 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies

Green E. Evans, Republican of Shelby County, 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

William A. Fields, Republican of Shelby County, 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

William C. Hodge, Republican of Hamilton County, 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Monroe W. Gooden, Democrat of Fayette County, 45<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Style Linton Hutchins, Republican of Hamilton County, 45<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, and

Jesse M. H. Graham, Republican of Montgomery County, 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, we wish to thank Mr. Christian Suttles, age six, a 2004 graduate of Rainbow Day Care and a kindergarten student at Normal Park Elementary School, for his electrifying portrayal of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; it is a distinct pleasure to listen to Mr. Suttle's recitation of Dr. King's "I have a dream" speech with such fervor and passion; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly gratefully acknowledges the dynamic Ms. Eunice Goolsby, owner of "Poems by Design" for her captivating presentation of the poem "In Celebration", which she was inspired to write many years ago when she discovered that Dr. King had died at the very hospital where she worked; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Goolsby, a member of World Life Ministries, International Church and a dedicated teacher and preacher of the Gospel, has been a registered nurse for 23 years and an active poet since 1986; she persuaded St. Joseph Hospital in 1989 to observe Black History Month, which was done annually through an intercom recitation of her poem, "In Celebration" until the hospital's closure in 1995; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Goolsby's poem proclaims the following inspirational message:

*We celebrate a people  
Who were able to withstand  
The many trials and tribulations  
Befallen them in this land*

*A time for reflection  
On great heroic deeds  
Wrought by their forefathers  
Demanding freedom for their seed!*

*Standing tall with courage  
Truth was on their side  
God's Spirit walked beside them  
Their footsteps to guide*

*Marching through the valleys  
Where ignorance and hatred grew  
With a message of love and non-violence  
To brothers and sisters of different hues!*

*There were many days of darkness  
Seemed the sun would never break through  
And the clouds of "lawful injustice"  
Kept precipitating the truth!*

*Unable to convince them all  
A changed heart was wrought in some  
And hope instilled in others  
That someday we'd overcome*

*This truth was called a movement  
That changed the course of our nation  
Which brings us to the reason  
For this month of celebration!*

; and

WHEREAS, the moving portrayal of these iconic figures out of the history of our State and nation rendered by the program participants faithfully captures the theme of this year's observance of Black History Month, "Out Of The Past Comes The Torch To Illuminate The Future", and should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we commend the program participants named in this resolution in the February 2005 observance of Black History Month by the General Assembly, thank them for their inspired presentations and offer each of them our best wishes for every success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.